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for England and Wales in the 1850's.\*

The object of this paper has been to inquire into the methods and materials used by Gregory King in his work on the population of England and Wales at the end of the seventeenth century. The relevance of the discussion for any new estimates of the population in 1695 must be left for later consideration. But so far as the first point is concerned, one fact is abundantly clear: King was a worthy successor to Graunt. Hampered by inability to use the full official data, he showed great imagination in his handling of what was available. Above all, his work demonstrates his awareness of the questions which need to be posed in studying population trends.† His approach and

knowledge of his own limitations are perhaps best summed up in a motto which he intended to use in the introduction to an alternative version of the *Observations*: "Pour bien savoir les Choses, il en faut savoir le détail: mais pource qu'il est presque infiny, nos Connoissances sont toujours superficielles et Imparfaites."\*

\* For England and Wales in 1850-2 the number of live births per 1,000 married women aged 15-49 years was over 265. Correction for under-registration in the period would raise the figure still higher. The Lichfield data suggest fairly late marriage, but a high marriage probability. Half of the women aged 25-9 years were single, while this was so for only one out of sixty in the age group 45-9 years.

† Some of these questions are posed by him in the P.R.O. journal, p. 8, namely: how many marriages annually; at what ages persons marry; how many widows and widowers; at what ages they become such;

how many 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th marriages; how many barren marriages; how many teeming women; how many die in childbed; how many die in labour; how many marriages produce only one child, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, etc. Similar awareness is shown in the *Observations*, p. 46, where he notes that "from a consideration of the male and female children in the said town, and the ages of their parents, at the time, when such children were respectively conceived, a scheme may be established, of the powers of generation..." and one of the draft tables in the P.R.O. journal, p. 21, was designed to do this by relating conceptions to married women at individual ages.

\* Since writing the above paper, I have been shown a copy of some comments by the late Professor Henry Higgs, which appear to refer to the Burns journal. Professor Higgs wrote that he had always felt sure that the volume existed but had long searched for it in vain. He was strongly in favour of publication of at least part of its contents. It now seems likely that publication of a fairly wide selection of King's manuscripts will be possible and I hope to preface the selection with a more detailed study of the significance of King's contributions to demography.

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